Please cancel claims 2 and 3 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend claims 1 and 4 as follows. A complete listing of all the claims appears below; this listing replaces all earlier amendments and listings of the claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A printing apparatus which divides a printing area in a scanning direction on a printing medium into a plurality of regions and has a print buffer having a column data amount stored that is smaller than the data that may be printed through one main scan of a printhead, wherein the print buffer is divided into a plurality of first regions for storing column data corresponding to the divided regions of a predetermined column amount, ~~a column amount of the column data stored in the print buffer being smaller than a column amount of column data to be printed by one scanning,~~ each first region being divided into a plurality of second regions in correspondence with the number of color components, comprising:

input means for sequentially inputting block data corresponding to the divided regions and having a plurality of compressed raster data, wherein the block data contains a plurality of color component data and a code representing a data delimiter between first color component data and second color component data;

acquisition means for acquiring N-bit raster data from the block data ~~input to said input means~~ by decompressing the compressed raster data and for determining the code;

conversion means for converting the raster data into column data;

transfer means for sequentially transferring the raster data acquired by said acquisition means to said conversion means;

second transfer means for sequentially transferring N column data converted by said conversion means to the print buffer;

storage means for storing the N column data transferred from said second transfer means in ~~the divided regions~~ <u>each second region</u> of the print buffer <u>on the basis of the code determined by said acquisition means</u>; and

control means for executing transfer processing of said transfer means, transfer processing of said second transfer means, and conversion processing of said conversion means in synchronism with a predetermined signal.

2. - 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim [[3]] <u>1</u>, wherein said acquisition means outputs a second predetermined signal to said conversion means when the code is determined.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said conversion means comprises holding means for holding N raster data transferred from said transfer means, and performs longitudinal/lateral conversion processing after said holding means holds the N raster data.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said conversion means comprises holding means for holding N raster data transferred from said transfer means, and when the second predetermined signal is input while said holding means holds M (M < N) raster data, sets (N-M) "0" data in said holding means and then performs longitudinal/lateral conversion processing.

7. - 10. (Cancelled)